



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

Thursday, November 1, 2007

CONTACT: Katy Peterson
Travel Montana
Montana Department of Commerce
406-841-2896

Marissa Kozel
Montana Department of Commerce
406-841-2772

Montanans Invited to Help Frame Montana's Brand Through Public Workshops in November

(HELENA) – What makes Montana special? What makes the state unique? What differentiates Montana from its competitors? Through a series of seven public workshops scheduled throughout the state in mid-November, Montanans are being asked to share their insights on these questions and assist in defining the essence of Montana's brand.

Spearheaded by the state's tourism division, Travel Montana, the Branding Roadshow will consist of four-hour workshops in seven cities across the state. Brand research consultants will lead the fun and engaging sessions, sharing the background of the project and the enlightening results from the summer's out-of-state focus group research. They will also facilitate brand discovery exercises to help further uncover the Montana brand—this time, from residents' perspectives.

"While this endeavor will certainly help direct our all-important tourism and recreation promotional efforts, this is a project whose outcome has the potential to serve a wide array of Montana industries" said Governor Schweitzer. The Governor is encouraging Montana citizens, business owners, economic organizations, tribal and community representatives, nonprofit entities and public agencies to attend the workshops which will help in creating a brand positioning statement with widespread relevance.

The workshops are free and open to the public and anyone who has an interest in promoting Montana is encouraged to attend.

- **Kalispell: Tuesday, November 6 –**

- Hilton Garden Inn, 1840 US Hwy 93 S, 8:30 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.
- **Missoula: Wednesday, November 7 –**
 - Hilton Garden Inn, 3720 N. Reserve St., 8:30 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.
- **Helena: Thursday, November 8 –**
 - Red Lion Colonial Hotel, 2301 Colonial Dr., 8:30 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.
- **Bozeman: Friday, November 9**
 - Best Western GranTree Inn, 1325 N. 7th Ave., 8:30 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.
- **Billings: Tuesday, November 13 –**
 - Holiday Inn Grand Montana, 5500 Midland Rd., 10:00 a.m. – 2:30 p.m. (includes lunch)
- **Glasgow: Wednesday, November 14 –**
 - Cottonwood Inn, Hwy 2 E, 1:00 p.m. – 5:00 p.m.
- **Great Falls: Thursday, November 15 –**
 - Best Western Heritage Inn, 1700 Fox Farm Rd., 1:00 p.m. – 5:00 p.m.

Montana Commerce Department Director Anthony J. Preite explained that the workshops are “an opportunity for Montanans to share their perspectives on what makes Montana special.” These insights, said Preite, will help create “a blueprint to define Montana in a way that differentiates ourselves from any other destination providing us opportunities to make powerful a presence which will translate into more business for the state.”

The presentation of the final Brand Platform is scheduled to occur in March 2008. Updates and information on this branding research project and workshop schedules can be found on Travel Montana’s Intranet site at www.travelmontana.mt.gov/branding.

Tourism and recreation is one of Montana’s basic industries. In 2007, Montana hosted close to 10.4 million non-resident visitors who spent over \$2.9 billion during their visits. Over 36,000 jobs are directly supported by nonresident travel, resulting in \$747 million in total personal income for Montana residents.

#####